

## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

*Sub A1* 1. A network-based parts distribution system comprising:  
a plurality of buyer computers [for operation by a system participant  
desiring to obtain one or more parts; ]

5 a plurality of seller computers [for operation by a system participant  
desiring to sell one or more parts; ] and

10 at least one server computer, /wherein said buyer computers, said seller  
computers and said server computer are interconnected as a computer network, said  
server computer being programmed to receive part related data from said seller  
computers and use said data to maintain a database of all available parts and to receive  
part requests from said buyer computers and select one or more parts from said  
database in response to said requests/

15 2. The parts distribution system of claim 1 wherein said server  
computer selects parts according to a buyer-specific picking order.

15 3. The parts distribution system of claim 1 wherein said server  
computer relays a purchase order issued by one of said buyer computers to an  
appropriate one of said seller computers.

20 4. The parts distribution system of claim 1 wherein said parts in  
said database <sup>one</sup> are sorted into a plurality of inventory categories.

5. The parts distribution system of claim 4 wherein each one of  
said inventory categories is further sorted into an plurality of sub-inventory categories.

6. The parts distribution system of claim 1 wherein said computer  
network is the Internet.

*Sub A2* 7. A method of distributing parts, said method comprising the  
steps of:

providing a plurality of buyer computers for operation by a system participant desiring to obtain one or more parts;

providing a plurality of seller computers for operation by a system participant desiring to sell one or more parts;

5 providing at least one server computer, wherein said buyer computers, said seller computers and said server computer are interconnected as a computer network;

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using said seller computers to input part related data to said server computer;

10 using said data to maintain a database of all available parts; using said buyer computers to transmit part requests to said server computer; and

selecting one or more parts from said database in response to said requests.

15 8. The method of claim 7 wherein said step of selecting one or more parts from said database includes selecting parts according to a buyer-specific picking order.

20 9. The method of claim 7 further comprising the step of using said server computer to relay a purchase order issued by one of said buyer computers to an appropriate one of said seller computers.

10. The method of claim 7 wherein said step of maintaining said database includes sorting said parts in said database into a plurality of inventory categories.

25 11. The method of claim 10 wherein each one of said inventory categories is further sorted into an plurality of sub-inventory categories.

12. The method of claim 7 wherein said computer network is the Internet.